# 5.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission MSA was the fourth fastest-growing area in the nation during the 1990s. Despite a national recession and relatively slow growth nationwide, the MSA has continued to show positive growth. The location of the study area within Sharyland Plantation, a 2,428.1-ha (6,000-ac) master-planned development, assures future growth and development would occur in the area. Construction is also planned to begin on the Anzalduas International Bridge and Port of Entry on the eastern edge of the study area. This new international crossing should accelerate NAFTA-related trade and commerce in the region, connecting the Mission and McAllen free-trade areas with Reynosa, and the rest of northern Mexico.

This projected growth and development, combined with the potential impacts from the Sharyland-Mexico 138-kV DC Tie Project could, cumulatively, affect the natural and human environment of the study area. These impacts could potentially include increased air emissions, increased water demand, increased surface water runoff, the conversion of farmland to urban and suburban development, and the possible loss of some native vegetation and wildlife habitat. The latter impact would be somewhat mitigated by the acquisition of lands for wildlife habitat by the TPWD, FWS, and private conservation groups. Other specific, future related impacts and/or developments in the immediate vicinity of the proposed transmission line are unknown by PBS&J at this time.

Sharyland's previously approved (by the PUC) 138-kV transmission line and substation project is currently under way, and should be completed by August 2004. The poles, conductor, and hardware for this project are currently on-site and the construction contract was awarded on or about May 10, 2004. It is anticipated that this project would employ two 4-man crews, one contract Crew Foreman, an Owner/Engineer Inspector, and one Project Manager, for the duration of the construction. The proposed Railroad Substation would be built on 1.6 ha (4 ac) of land adjacent to the transmission line. However, construction of this project would not overlap construction of the HVDC Interconnection Project.

While Sharyland would irreversibly expend labor, materials, fuel, etc., in the construction and operation of the proposed DC tie transmission line, no other known irreversible or irretrievable commitments of natural resources would occur. As the purpose of the proposed transmission line is to help meet rising energy demands along the U.S.-Mexico border, it would not create any major new energy demand. In addition, no new, unusual, or limited sources or types of materials are proposed for use in this project.